

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board held at Beckingham Recreation Room on Tuesday, 25th March 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

Elected Members

* Messrs M.A. Harris (Chairman)
* R. Adam (Vice-Chairman)
* A. Barker
* P. Bradwell
* G.R.J. Bramhill
* R.H. Brown
* J. Coggon
* P. Cornish
* K. Durdy
* R. Mason
* M. Wagstaff
* S. White

Nominated by North Lincolnshire Council

* Cllr R. Allcock
* Mr N. Arrand
* Cllrs T. Barker
* J. Briggs
* Messrs R. Chapman
* N. Culpin
* Cllr W. Eckhardt
* Mr J. Lee
* Cllr D. Robinson
* Mr J. Smith
* Cllr Mrs L. Redfern

Nominated by Bassetlaw District Council

* Cllr Mrs H. Brand
* Cllr Mrs J.M. Sanger

* *Present*

* Messrs A. McGill (Chief Executive)
* D.J. Sisson (Engineer)
* R.P. Mitchell (Director of Operations)
* S. Thackray (Director of Finance)
* Miss H. O'Callaghan (Nottinghamshire County Council)
* *In attendance*

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Miss H. O'Callaghan, Mr J. Coggon, Mr P. Cornish, Cllr N. Culpin, Cllr Mrs H. Brand and Cllr Mrs L. Redfern.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr R. Allcock, Cllr J. Briggs, Mr R. Mason and Cllr D. Robinson - minute15.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed to discuss the Association of Drainage Authorities, Trent Branch Annual General Meeting under agenda item 20.

4. BOARD MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 28th January 2014 be confirmed as a correct record subject to it being noted that Cllr R. Allcock had declared an interest in minute 17:3.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5:1 Minute 19, Page 180 - Emergency Support Personnel

The Director of Operations confirmed that training for Emergency Support Personnel would be undertaken on 9th April 2014.

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6. PLANT AND COMPENSATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Director of Operations reported that a quotation had been received from Herder for the new flail in the sum of £15,905; a provision of £16,000 had been made in the 2014/15 estimates.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the minutes of the Plant and Compensation Committee meeting held on 28th January 2014 be adopted by the Board.
- (b) That the minutes of the Plant and Compensation Committee meeting held on 4th March 2014 be adopted subject to the following amendments:
 - (i) Minute 6, Compensation Rates - amend 36 tons per acre to 3.6 tons per acre.
 - (ii) Minute 7, Whitgift Sluice Outfall - amend from jetting to dredging.
- (c) That the Board purchase a new Herder flail at a cost of £15,905 in the new financial year.

7. CONSORTIUM COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Consortium Committee held on 10th February 2014 be adopted by the Board.

8. DRAINAGE RATES AND SPECIAL LEVIES

8:1 Rate Collection

The Director of Finance reported that drainage rates outstanding at 17th March 2014 totalled £8,170.29. The percentage of rates collected (98.03%) was slightly higher than at the same time last year.

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8:2 Write-Offs

A schedule detailing amounts totalling £2,736.89 was presented for consideration and Officers recommended that this amount was written-off as irrecoverable. The Director of Finance reported that £1,569.52 of this was in respect of a company that had gone into liquidation with no pay-out to creditors; although these amounts were written off, the Rating Officer would continue to establish ownership of land where this was not known.

RESOLVED

That amounts totalling £2,736.89 be written-off.

9. FINANCE

The Director of Finance presented a full report on the Board's financial position as at 28th February 2014 which showed a net surplus of £111,893 due mainly to delayed capital works. The forecast for the year was for a net deficit of £465,659 which included capital accruals brought forward from 2012/13.

A total of £1,168,432.42 was invested with four banks/building societies and seven annuity loans totalling £161,044.64 remained outstanding with the Public Works Loan Board. A hire purchase agreement had been taken out for the new tractor in the sum of £51,075 for a period of two years at 0% interest.

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10. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Director of Finance presented the attached schedule detailing payments made since the last Board meeting. It was noted that from 1st April 2014 all payments over £500 would need to be listed on the Board's website.

RESOLVED

That the attached payment schedule totalling £207,412.62 be approved.

11. OPERATIONS REPORT

The Director of Operations gave an update on winter maintenance works which were progressing well and should be completed within budget.

In response to Mr R.H. Brown, the Director of Operations reported that it had been possible to undertake the works on the Warping Drain around the badger setts, however, an allowance had been made in the estimates for piling works to protect the banks should this be necessary. The Engineer confirmed that the problem was not as severe as originally thought as the setts were quite high up in the bank and there was sufficient freeboard.

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12. ASSET RENEWAL AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECTS

12:1 Medium Term Plan (MTP)

The Engineer reported that a change in Government policy required that applications for flood defence grant in aid be submitted for the next six years. The schemes detailed on the attached table were submitted on behalf of the Board.

Mr R. Chapman confirmed that North Lincolnshire Council's West Butterwick scheme had received Government funding.

The Engineer expected that the cost of repairing the slips following the December 2013 tidal surge would be reimbursed. The Director of Finance confirmed that an insurance claim had also been submitted to cover assets in the Board's ownership but would not cover watercourse repairs.

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12:2 Crowle Pumped Area - Paupers Drain Improvements (downstream works)

The contractor had commenced works on site; the new pile wingwall to Paupers Pumping Station had been installed and channel excavation works were progressing. It was noted that additional side culvert works had been necessary due to their poor condition.

The Engineer reported that some of the spoil being excavated was heavy clay and, therefore, unsuitable for spreading on the adjacent land. Investigations and costs for either removing the material or leaving a spoil bank and compensating for land loss were being investigated and would be reported to a future meeting.

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12:3 Crowle Pumped Area - Paupers Drain Improvements (upstream works)

The Engineer reported that works proposed for the length of watercourse between the A161 and Common Carrs Drain outfall were being reviewed to optimise a solution to better accommodate the electricity poles and the replacement of Bridge No. 12 at the Common Carrs outfall.

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12:4 Crowle Pumped Area - Bewcarrs Pumping Station

Officers had instructed Northern Power to carry out work to obtain the necessary wayleaves for an electrical supply to the station at a cost of £1,426.

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12:5 Crowle Pumped Area - Warplands Drain

Following comments made at the last Board meeting, the Engineer confirmed that work had been delayed and the proposals were currently being reviewed. A report would be presented to a future Board meeting for consideration.

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12:6 Kelfield Catchment Study

Officers reported that modelling work was underway and application had been made for reserved flood defence grant in aid funding in 2016/2017 for a pumping station refurbishment scheme with detailed design in 2015/2016.

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12:7 Telemetry System

The Engineer reported that works were currently being undertaken at Rushcarr and Trentside Pumping Stations. The scheme was on schedule and within budget.

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13. PROPOSED DEPOT MOVE

At the last Board meeting it had been agreed to further consider the option of achieving a new build as long as it was cost neutral to the Board. Further investigations had, therefore, been undertaken by Officers for a new depot within a limit of £279,000.

The Chief Executive reported that by moderating the size and complexity of the scheme some cost reduction could be achieved, however, there had been a 15% increase in construction costs over the last two years. The architect believed that a substantially smaller design had a realistic chance of meeting the budgetary constraints now in place, however, more detailed work would be required to be certain and much of this would depend on the location chosen for the new build. Five alternative sites had already been identified and a provisional date of 24th April 2014 scheduled for site visits by the Finance Committee.

The Chief Executive further reported that the Board's new Health and Safety advisor had visited the Board's Derrythorpe depot and made recommendations on actions to be taken by staff to minimise the risk when leaving the site.

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14. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

14:1 Environmental Stewardship and Cross Compliance

It was noted that work by Natural England and the Association of Drainage Authorities to produce guidance for the industry was ongoing.

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14:2 Board's Plan for Implementing the Eel Regulations 2009

The Engineer reported that eel surveys had been completed in 16 of the Board's catchments. These had been funded from the £9,000 provided to the Board under the Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee's Eel Regulation Programme.

Eels were found to be present in Keadby Warping Drain and Owston Ferry Drain catchments. A variety of fish had also been recorded in the main drains for Cow Lane, Paupers, Derrythorpe, Southfield, Kelfield, Black Dyke, South Street, Heckdyke, Gringley and Scaftworth Pumping Stations and Keadby Warping Drain. The number of fish was generally low and included the following freshwater species; 3-Spined Stickleback, Gudgeon, Roach, Rudd, Perch and Pike.

The Board's Strategy for Implementing the Eel Regulations 2009 was now being developed based on the survey information. The Engineer confirmed that an exemption had been applied for so that works could be delayed until pumping stations were refurbished, but application had been made for grant in aid on those sites designated as priority by the Environment Agency should the exemption be refused.

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14:3 River Idle Management Partnership

As reported at the January Board meeting, a proposal had been put to the partnership's January meeting for the Board to evaluate the work content and likely costs required to de-silt the River Idle.

The Engineer explained that this would involve:

- Establishing silt levels and costs - the Environment Agency had already provided their data on silt levels to the Board.
- Carrying out limited further surveys, from bridges and access points to confirm current silt levels.
- Preparation of a budget for undertaking the works.

The findings would be presented to a Stakeholder Meeting in early April and if funding was secured the Board had offered to supervise delivery of the works.

The Engineer reported that, linked to the River Idle Management Project, were proposals put forward by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to improve water quality in the Board maintained Dawson Dyke and hence the River Idle which involved removal of phosphates from outflows from Lound Sewage Treatment Works. This work would be funded via the Water Framework Directive and must be completed in the current financial year. Installation of reed beds at the sewage works would have little impact but the Board's Officers were concerned that if planted at the lower reaches, they could restrict the flow. The Board's Officers were liaising with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust regarding the works to ensure that land drainage and water level management were not compromised.

Cllr R. Allcock reported that the water quality was monitored regularly by the water companies and the level of phosphates acceptable was calculated depending on the dilution e.g. in simple terms the larger the watercourse receiving the discharge the greater the amount of phosphates that would be deemed acceptable. He queried why the water authority was not being asked to take action to limit the level of phosphates from the sewage treatment works if the level was higher than that considered acceptable by the Wildlife Trust. The Chairman stated that although the Board fully supported environmental enhancement wherever possible, this must not be to the detriment of flood protection and water level management.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Board continue to provide support to the River Idle Management Partnership.
- (b) That the Board's Officers liaise with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to ensure that the creation of reed beds did not have an adverse effect on land drainage and water level management within the area.

14:4 Invasive Species

Officers reported that action was being undertaken to control Japanese Knotweed that was growing on the banks of the Carr Dyke at Retford. Adjacent landowners would be notified and asked to control this plant on their property.

The Engineer stated that Japanese Knotweed was listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it was illegal to release or allow these species to escape into the wild. This meant that soil or other debris that contains part of these plants must be treated as contaminated waste. The Engineer confirmed that the weed would be eradicated with herbicide to ensure there was no danger of the seeds being transported when the spoil was spread.

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15. DELEGATED MATTERS - PLANNING, BYELAWS AND SUPERVISORY ROLE

15:1 Byelaw Applications

Mr R. Mason declared an interest in IANNB001-2014.

The following Byelaw Consents had been issued under delegated authority since the last Board meeting:

IANNB001-2014 - Increase the flow of surface water to the Board maintained Red Carr Lane Drain from development at Carrdale Farm at national grid reference SE 78911 13904 in the parishes of Crowle and Ealand.

IANNB002-2014 - Installation of a high voltage electricity cable by directional drilling beneath the Board maintained Main Drain at national grid reference SK 66860 84867 in the parish of Barnby Moor.

IANNB003-2014 - Replacement of an existing culvert at CH 760m on the Board maintained drain IOA800600 at national grid reference SK 72338 86225 in the parish of Hayton.

IANNB004-2014 - Installation of a 400mm diameter treated effluent outfall pipe by directional drilling beneath the Board maintained Folly Drain at national grid reference SE 76045 06653 in the parish of Epworth.

IANNB007-2014 - Construction of a bridge and fencing within nine metres of the Board maintained Medley Drain to the rear of 7 Belshaw Lane at national grid reference SE 77448 06125 in the parish of Belton.

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15:2 Section 23 Applications

Consent had been issued under delegated authority to restore/alter six existing sluices at national grid references SE 76429 03095, SE 76781 03032, SE 76413 02946, SE 76838 02868, SE 76769 02725 and SE 76597 02533 and to install three new sluices at national grid references SE 76854 02841 and SE 76821 02493 in various private watercourses located to the east of the Board maintained Turbary Drain in the parish of Haxey.

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15:3 Planning Applications

Cllrs R. Allcock, J. Briggs and D. Robinson declared an interest.

Officers had been consulted on seven planning applications since the last Board meeting and appropriate observations had been made. No objections had been made.

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15:4 Keadby Wind Farm Culverts

See minute 12:5.

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16. RIVER TRENT CATCHMENT FLOOD MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ISLE OF AXHOLME STRATEGY

Cllr R. Allcock had spoken to Mr M. Wray from the Environment Agency regarding implementation of the Strategy. He would also be attending a meeting run by the local Member of Parliament, Mr A. Percy, on 28th March 2014 to discuss flooding and the December tidal surge and he suggested that this would be the ideal opportunity to raise this issue. Cllr Allcock suggested that the Strategy Group would be the ideal forum to discuss the implementation as this included representatives from internal drainage boards, the Environment Agency and the councils.

The Chief Executive stated that there was still the issue of funding to be addressed before the Strategy could be implemented and suggested that this matter be considered by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee at its next meeting.

RESOLVED

Cllr R. Allcock and Mr J. Coggon raise the matter at the next meeting of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and that the Chief Executive pursue this with the Environment Agency.

17. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Chief Executive reported that the new Health and Safety Committee had met on 3rd March 2014 for the first time. In future, these meetings would be held quarterly and a representative from each of the workforces would attend along with the works managers. Items discussed had included the change of the provision of health and safety services and training and emphasis was placed on the culture and communication of health and safety matters both up and down the chain of command along with the need to actively clear any issues raised and recorded on the Health and Safety Issues database. Issues arising from the recent driver safety training recently undertaken were also raised.

It was noted that Point of Work Risk Assessment forms had been introduced to replace the dynamic risk assessments previously used; these new risk assessments were aimed at engaging employees in the task they were about to undertake and required a brief written record to be made.

Full copies of the minutes were available on request should any member wish to consider these matters in more detail.

The Chief Executive further reported that a Health and Safety Audit was underway; some site visits had been undertaken as well as an inspection of the depot and South Street Pumping Station. He stated that the inspections had been very thorough and any matters raised were being addressed.

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18. LOCAL AUTHORITY SEMINAR

Cllr R. Allcock had recently attended the Local Authority Seminar organised by the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) for local authority representatives of internal drainage boards. This had been very well supported by the nominated members.

Cllr Allcock reported that Mr H. Cater, Chairman of ADA, had opened the Seminar and had talked about his recent visit to the Somerset Levels to view the flooding. Presentations had included:

Implications of the Water Bill and Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 - Dr J. Venables, Chief Executive of ADA.

Public Sector Co-operation Agreement - Mr I. Russell, Partnership and Investments Manager at the Environment Agency.

Aquatic and Riparian Vegetation Management Handbook - Miss L. Thomas, Senior Ecologist at JBA Consulting.

2013/14 Floods - The Place for Maintenance in Flood Risk Management - Mr N. Stevens, Chief Executive of the Somerset Drainage Boards' Consortium.

Partnership Working and Funding - Mr M. Smalls, Partnership Funding and Contributions at the Environment Agency.

Using Effective Collaboration to Co-create Solutions in Complex Places - Miss E. Beever, Senior Water and Environmental Scientist at Royal Haskoning DHV.

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19. STAFFING

19:1 Appointment of Engineering Manager

The Chief Executive reported that a new Engineering Manager had been employed by Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board. He would manage specific projects, conduct planning investigations as required for the Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board and Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board and oversee the management of the Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board's Direct Labour Organisation. It was noted that as a shared employee, under the terms of the Consortium Agreement he would be employed by the lead board. The Boards would be recharged on an actual time-spent basis.

The Chief Executive further reported that the post had been offered to Mr R. Brown, a qualified Civil Engineer with experience of running a site and good communication skills who had worked with public sector organisations in the past. The Chairman confirmed that he had met Mr Brown and fully endorsed the appointment.

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19:2 Pay Increase

The Chief Executive reported that the Association of Drainage Authorities Lincolnshire Branch had negotiated a 1% pay increase for employees with the Unions in line with Government guidance for public sector bodies.

RESOLVED

That a 1% pay increase be paid to all employees in line with the Association of Drainage Authorities Lincolnshire Branch Wages and Salaries and Conditions of Service with effect from 1st April 2014.

20. ASSOCIATION OF DRAINAGE AUTHORITIES (ADA) TRENT BRANCH

The Engineer reported that the Trent Branch Annual General Meeting would be held on 4th June 2014 at Doncaster Rugby Club. The meeting would commence at 10.00 a.m. and would conclude with lunch at 1.00 p.m. Presentations would include an ADA National update, the National Farmers' Union Flooding Manifesto, the River Idle Maintenance Pilot and the Environment Agency. The cost would be £40 per delegate.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Messrs P. Bradwell, K. Durdy, R. Mason, M. Wagstaff, Cllr R. Allcock, Cllrs Mesdames H. Brand and J.M. Sanger attend the meeting.

CHAIRMAN